colossal: *(adj.)*
gigantic; huge

This T-shirt is size "colossal."
bizarre: (adj.) unusual; weird

Okay, so my cobweb is bizarre. But just because we all look alike doesn’t mean our webs have to.
ravenous: (adj.)
extremely hungry

Of course I’m ravenous again.
I haven’t eaten for ten minutes.
punctual: (adj.)
on time; prompt

Isn’t being five minutes late still considered punctual – like walking into a movie after the previews have begun?
arduous: (adj.)
difficult

Jumping over the moon proved to be too **arduous**, so I just jumped to it and stayed here.
clarify: (v.)
to make clear or understandable

Since the creatures here don’t understand our spoken language, I left a written message to clarify why we visited their planet.
allege: (v.)
to state or accuse without showing proof

You can’t allege that my feet will grow if I tell a lie just because your nose does.

Illustration ©Marc Tyler Nobleman
lollygag: (v.)
to fool around; dawdle

This is what can happen if you lollygag through October, waiting until the day before Halloween to get your costume.
**jubilant**: (adj.)
very happy; joyful

Sticking my head out the car window makes me **jubilant**. This just isn’t the same.
congregate: (v.)
to gather or crowd together

Lots of other birds congregate around that thing all the time. Why do we seem to be the only ones who are afraid?
phobia: *(n.)*
a strong (usually unexplainable) fear of something; terror

No thanks. My phobia of boats is greater than my phobia of deserted islands.
melancholy: (adj.)
sad

Don’t be melancholy because you can’t make it to my birthday party. Maybe you’ll cheer up if you get me a gift anyway.
industrious: (adj.)
hardworking

The beaver that built that dam is more industrious than I’ll ever be.
zany: (adj.) foolish or crazy

Your belief that the world is round is zany. What are you going to tell me next - that the Earth revolves around the sun?
infinitesimal: *(adj.)*
too small to be measured; tiny

There’s only an infinitesimal amount of milk left, so I would pour in no more than four flakes.
boisterous: *(adj.)*
noisy; loud

Our neighbors are very polite. Every year before their son’s *boisterous* birthday party, they wrap their entire house in soundproof padding.
aptitude: (n.)
a natural talent or ability

I have an aptitude for skiing.
It’s stopping that’s a problem.
fabricate: (v.)
to make up; invent

Magic beans, an enormous beanstalk, a giant’s castle in the clouds? Yeah, right. Is your name really Jack, or did you fabricate that, too?
motive: (n.)
a reason

Funny, I thought food was the only motive raccoons have for going through our trash.
disheveled: (adj.)
messy

But you said I look disheveled when I leave my shirt untucked.
**thwart:** (v.)
to stop; prevent

It will take more than a small hole to **thwart** Peggy’s plan to get dinner to her family on the surface.
**dynamic: (adj.)** energetic; forceful

Rather than just read my report on how to fill a cavity, it would be more dynamic if I acted it out. Any volunteers?
scrutinize: (v.)
to examine closely; inspect

The more I scrutinize these hieroglyphs, the more I think they’re the lyrics to “Happy Birthday to You.”
substantial: (adj.)
great in amount, importance, or value

My brother’s comic book collection is so substantial that he’s renting part of my room for extra storage.
instigate: (v.)
to provoke or start

Any creatures that were foolish enough to instigate anything with either of us in the past won’t make the same mistake now that we’ve teamed up.
sluggish: (adj.) slow in movement or action

So that’s why I’ve been so sluggish all day!
stamina: (n.)
strength or energy to keep doing something for a long time

Going for a world record takes great stamina – but making it through this book in search of which one you’ll try to break takes even more!
desolate: (adj.) isolated; deserted

If you think the mailbox is in a desolate spot, you should see the house.
admonish: (v.)
to scold or warn gently

No need to get angry. I took notes the last time you had to admonish me for this, so I’ll just go reread those now.
**hodgepodge**: *(n.)*  
a mixture or jumble

They call this a special, but it’s really just a **hodgepodge** of all the food that didn’t sell yesterday.
**WORD OF THE WEEK**

**compassion: (n.)**

sympathy; kindness; consideration

Well, he does know it's cool to wear a baseball cap backwards. Let's show him some **compassion** about the rest.
excel: (v.)
to do much better at something than others; outdo

I excel at jigsaw puzzles. I bet I could have put Humpty Dumpty together again.
pandemonium: (n.)
a wild uproar

Now I see what caused this pandemonium – you reversed the numbers in the sign!
persnickety: *(adj.)*
fussy about small details

I’m sorry to be **persnickety**, but didn’t you buy this at my yard sale last year?
relinquish: (v.)
to give up or surrender something

Yes, she did relinquish her taste for people food, but apparently licking crumbs off someone’s face is still fair game.
conundrum: (n.)
a difficult problem

At least in math class every conundrum has an answer in the back of the book.
**revere:** (v.)
to admire or look up to

It bothers me that people *revere* Paul Revere for his midnight ride as if he did it alone. I deserve some of the credit.
compromise: (v.)
to settle a disagreement through cooperation;
to meet halfway

I understand that you like one action more than the other, but there’s no way to compromise. Now that you’re on, you’ll have to both see and saw.
**consume**: (v.)
to eat or drink something

I can carry and **consume** a bread crumb five times my body weight. But when we hang out, that suddenly doesn’t seem impressive.
abhor: (v.)
to hate

I abhor losing ice cream so I designed these shoes to catch any falling scoops.